

The La Sportiva Lake District Mountain Trial Sunday 10th September 2017

Organisers' Report

Summary

The 63rd Mountain Trial was run from Gatesgarth Farm, Buttermere. Mike Hind set challenging courses. The weather worsened during the morning and the Classic and Medium courses were stopped at Controls 5 and 4 respectively. The Short course was run as planned. Many volunteers worked hard, both at the venue and in tough conditions at the manned checkpoints. A well-organised operation efficiently retrieved runners who had come down to Seathwaite.

Venue

Gatesgarth Farm made an excellent venue. In particular the farmer kindly let us use his enormous barn. Due to the weather conditions, we housed registration, download, Raynet and Pete Bland Sports in the barn. We also used the far end for kit check and the start. Podium catering provided the delicious post-race meal inside the barn. The farmer provided a generator for our use when the electricity supply to the barn proved inadequate.

37 people camped overnight in the field. The intended parking field was largely too soft to use but we managed to squeeze nearly all the cars onto hard standing in and around the farmyard.

Portaloos and tables and chairs were supplied by Lakes Loos. We had 3 portaloos but could have done with 4.

Weather

The weather was pretty much as forecast. In the early morning it was overcast with intermittent rain. As the day progressed the wind picked up to 40-50 mph on the tops and there was persistent rain, heavy at times. Conditions improved slightly in mid-afternoon but intermittent heavy rain returned in late afternoon. This meant that conditions were testing for the less strong or poorly clad competitors, and unpleasant for the control marshals. It was particularly severe for the Raynet relay station on the summit of Dale Head! The streams rose during the day but remained safely crossable with care for most competitors.

At 7 a.m. the day organiser, planner and controller decided to go ahead with the full courses.

At 12.45 a decision was made to stop the Classic and Medium courses in view of the perceived risk to marshals and competitors given the prevailing weather.

Sponsorship

Lyon equipment are the main sponsors under the La Sportiva brand. They supported a substantial prize list, provided race numbers, 2 pairs of La Sportiva shoes and made a large contribution towards the expenses of the event. The YHA provided prizes for the first YHA members who hadn't won another prize.

Map

A pre-marked Harvey map was used. It was printed on waterproof paper and was clear and legible. Malcolm Campbell prepared the map for printing by BML. The scale for the Long and Medium was 1:40000 with 1:25000 for the Short. As in 2016, the map was printed on waterproof paper and laminated on both sides. It remained easy to handle and problems of the print rubbing off were eliminated. This year was a severe test and many people commented that the map remained intact and legible.

Planner: Mike Hind **Controller:** Dave Fenwick

Entries

Entries opened in April and closed on 28th August. A few late entries were accepted until six days before the race when the start lists were finalised and distributed. 89 of the entrants had not previously completed a Trial. 30 of those were on the Short course.

Classic Trial 94 entries (including 9 women), Medium Trial 70 entries, Short Trial 82 entries

Total: 246 (187 in 2016)

The Pairs option again proved popular with 13 pairs entering the Short Course.

SportIdent took the entries. Start time allocation was done on the basis of the runner's stated preference. Most people were allocated a random start time within their preferred block although the top runners were "seeded" to split them up a bit. Some runners were deliberately placed at the start of the early blocks.

All entries were checked to ensure that the runners had appropriate experience.

Courses

Classic Trial 26.4 km 2400 m of ascent (shortened on the day to 16.4 km and 1900 m of ascent)

Medium Trial 20.3 km 1600 m of ascent (shortened for later runners to 12.0 km and 1250m of ascent)

Short trial 14.5 km 1350 m of ascent

Numbers of Runners

Classic Trial 66 started (44 reached checkpoint 5 and 22 retired before that)

Medium Trial 58 started (10 completed the full course, 15 reached checkpoint 4 and 33 retired before that)

Short Trial 72 started (55 completed the course and 17 retired)

Total: 196 started (160 started in 2016). 124 completed the full or shortened course. (150 completed their courses in 2016).

Permissions

The courses traversed National Trust land and we completed their event licensing process.

Safety

Raynet provided radio communication to some of the checkpoints.

Derek Allison provided First Aid cover.

Dick Courchee was the designated on-the-day Safety Officer.

There was a full kit check before the start.

Cockermouth mountain rescue had been informed of the event in advance. In the late afternoon they were called when a Short Course competitor was badly overdue. They were stood down soon after when he arrived back, severely hypothermic, having fortunately been found and escorted down by other competitors.

Results Processing

Andrew Leaney of SPORTident provided a very efficient service on the day and a scrolling results display in the barn. The results were posted on the SportIdent web site, on WinSplits and RouteGadget. 44 competitors drew their routes on the RouteGadget site.

Results

The Classic course was stopped at Control 5 around 12:50 before any runners had reached it. We decided to award prizes on the basis of times up to that point. Nicholas Barber was the fastest there in 3 hours 14 minutes and Duncan Archer was 10 minutes slower. Jessica Richardson was the first woman in 4:32. Dark Peak were the first team, led by John Hunt who was first V50 in 5th place.

On the Medium Course, the runners were stopped at Control 4 but ten had already gone through and they are to be congratulated on completing the full course in such conditions. Chloe Haines was first

in 5 hours 21 minutes with Kirsty Bryan Jones 2nd in 5:38. James Woodman was fastest of those who reached Control 4 in 2:45.

18-year old Lucy Haines was fastest women on the the Short Course in 3 hours 34 minutes and James Titmuss was first overall in 2:51.

By finishing the Short course, Joss Naylor recorded his 50th official Mountain Trial completion.

The Short course prizes were awarded at the venue and prizes for the Classic and Medium were posted out afterwards.

In view of the fact that the Medium and Classic courses were stopped, trophies were mainly not awarded this year. However, the Ted Dance Women's Trophy on the Medium is being awarded to Chloe Haines.

Helpers

Dick Courchee acted as Day Organiser. He was strongly supported by Anne Salisbury. About 20 people helped at the venue on the day, and a further 8 people acted as checkpoint marshals. Tim Goffe co-ordinated the checkpoint marshals before and during the event.

This year we found that many of our regular helpers were not available and we are very grateful to all those who stepped in. At times, the organisation was very stretched dealing with missing runners and the transport of those who had been told to retire.

Website

The website www.ldmta.org.uk was updated from time to time and the completions lists will be updated.

Publicity

The results are on the FRA website and were in the 28 September edition of Athletics Weekly.

Competitor feedback

Competitors were invited to provide feedback. More than 25 did so. Many felt that stopping the two courses was reasonable although some would have preferred to be allowed to continue. Quite a few said they were surprised that bad weather courses had not been used. Those who were transported back from Seathwaite expressed their gratitude. Several people said they were confused about whether it was necessary to punch at the fence on the way to checkpoint 1. Many commented on the efficiency of the organisation and the pleasant attitude of all the officials. People thought the course planning was excellent. The post-race meal was widely praised as was the quality of the map protection. Suggestions included the use of criteria for helping to decide whether to use bad weather courses, extra kit requirements and free extra hot drinks.

David & Miriam Rosen Organisers